

Document EC01

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PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING  
7/14/04

1 Gonzalez. She is making a statement on behalf of  
2 Congressman Bob Filner.

3 MS. INEZ GONZALEZ: Good morning. Inez, I-N-E-Z,  
4 Gonzalez, G-O-N-Z-A-L-E-Z. I'm the District Director for  
5 Congressman Bob Filner. I'm reading a statement on his  
6 behalf.

7 Imperial County's air is under siege. The county  
8 currently has the highest childhood asthma rate in the State  
9 of California, partly because of pollution from power plants  
10 in Mexicali. As the Department of Energy considers  
11 Presidential permits for Intergen and Sempra to run  
12 transmission lines from their power plants into the United  
13 States, it must closely examine the environmental and health  
14 impact of these power plants.

15 The Department of Energy must insist that Sempra  
16 and Intergen finance sufficient pollution reduction efforts  
17 in Imperial County to offset the emissions generated by your  
18 power plants. These companies should have no more than two  
19 years to offset all their PM-10s and NOx emissions by paving  
20 roads and supporting other projects in Imperial County.

21 The Department of Energy must also insist that  
22 Sempra and Intergen add dry-cooling systems to their plants  
23 in order to minimize use of huge quantities of low salinity  
24 water destined for the New River and Salton Sea. The  
25 diversion of this water shrinks the Salton Sea and leads to

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1 increased PM-10 emissions from the exposed shoreline.

2 To assure the respiratory health of children and  
3 others in Imperial County, as well as our neighbors in  
4 Mexicali, the Department of Energy must also ensure vigorous  
5 and comprehensive monitoring of the emissions and air  
6 quality. The Imperial County Air Pollution Control District  
7 should receive regularly updated information and analysis of  
8 the air quality.

9 The Department of Energy, Sempra, Intergen and all  
10 of us who live at the border have an opportunity to work  
11 together on both sides of the border to combat the dirty air  
12 that is poisoning our children. I urge the Department of  
13 Energy today to seize this opportunity.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. ANTHONY COMO: Thank you, Ms. Gonzalez. I  
16 just want to mention, if any of you have neighbors, friends,  
17 colleagues that may only speak Spanish, Mrs. Gonzalez will  
18 be making the same statement this evening at the Calexico  
19 meeting. So you might want to encourage them to attend that  
20 one. It might be easier for them to understanding what's  
21 being said. Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Joe Maruca.

23 MR. JOE MARUCA: Thank you very much for being  
24 here and thank you for hearing me. My name is Doctor Joe  
25 Maruca, M-A-R-U-C-A. I'm a retired teacher, coach,

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1 principal, school superintendent, currently reelected my  
2 second term as County Supervisor in Imperial County.

3           There's a reason why those power plants are here.  
4 A number of reasons, really. If you take a look at the  
5 recent history of the construction of power plants, it  
6 doesn't take a rocket scientist to see they pick areas like  
7 this, where there are people of color, people of low income  
8 and no political clout, as well as, no population. And they  
9 will continue to do that.

10           And then you have to understand that there will be  
11 other plants in Mexico in -- as I understand it, another  
12 plant or two planned for Mexicali, as we speak.

13           The amount of gas that that 36-inch, 34-inch  
14 pipeline is capable of carrying is barely touched at this  
15 point. The pollution already drifting across the border is  
16 scientifically documented and causing us huge problems here.  
17 Not only with our families, not only with our children, not  
18 only with our schools, but even now it's going to affect our  
19 industries, because we are a serious non-attainment area  
20 classified by the Federal Government. We are not sure what  
21 we are going to have to do with that.

22           So even before the power plants were build we had  
23 a problem. Now the power plants are spewing that crap into  
24 the air, it's exacerbated.

25           And as I read the San Diego Union this morning,

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1 there's a huge microchip center that's going to be built  
2 down there. And those are huge users of water and  
3 polluters. So this is going to continue.

4           What you do -- what the Department of Energy does  
5 with this sets a template, because there are a series of  
6 plants across the border planned. This will set the  
7 template. If we make them pay now, what they do with the  
8 next plant and the next plant, whether it's in Texas,  
9 whether it's in New Mexico, whether it's across the border  
10 in Arizona, the template will be set that you cannot spew  
11 horse manure in the air and expect our children and people  
12 to breathe it. It's not acceptable.

13           I first heard about it -- and I recent the way  
14 they came in here like cavaliers. I was sitting in my desk,  
15 a rooky County Supervisor and somebody throws this huge book  
16 on my desk. And I said: What is that?

17           That's an environmental study for the 36 pipeline  
18 coming through your county.

19           Oh? Does anybody know anything about this?

20           No. This is it. You know, it goes through mostly  
21 federal property with a little bit of county property and a  
22 little bit of private property.

23           And so I started reading this. They shoved this  
24 down our throat, the Federal Government. No consultation,  
25 no nothing. So we sued saying: Well, the results of the

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1 gas that goes into Mexico causes the effect on the air. We  
2 lost.

3 After the Federal Government signed a presidential  
4 permit, like, zip, despite our protests. After the  
5 California State Land Commission signed a permit, like, zip.  
6 Like we didn't even exist. Our great benefactor, Cruz  
7 Bustamante, comes down, shmoozes around, and says: I have  
8 no choice, I've got to sign it. It was bought and done and  
9 paid for before we even had a chance. They're only a bunch  
10 of poor Mexicans down here, what the hell do they mean.  
11 They don't vote. They only have a 150,000 people. We'll  
12 poison their air, the hell with them, and we get the power  
13 that they need in the metropolitan areas. And that's not  
14 right. Not only is it immoral, it's illegal.

15 And I question how much money crossed hands in  
16 Mexico, because they have one of the most polluted cities  
17 around. That air down there. Have you ever been to  
18 Calexico? Have you ever been to Mexico, to Mexicali, and  
19 breathe that air? And yet they let them put that plant up  
20 there with prevailing mostly westerly winds. It's a sin.  
21 It's a crime.

22 There were several lies that were perpetrated  
23 while this whole thing was going on. Number one, they said  
24 the offsets of these plants will be taken care of by  
25 industry. We're going to convert -- Mexican industry will

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1 convert to gas. Horse manure. Didn't happen. They made no  
2 marketing efforts to do this. And I have friends of mine,  
3 environmentalist down there, and God believe it -- I'm not  
4 an environmentalist. I'm a right-wing Republican. I feel  
5 like a trader talking about this, really, but this  
6 transcends politics and philosophies. They made no effort  
7 to market that gas down there. It was just a bunch of  
8 baloney.

9 Number two, if you have problems, if you cut this  
10 gas off, we'll ship oil up and we'll fuel these with oil.  
11 Well, that's a lie, too, because you couldn't get enough oil  
12 to do that.

13 Next, if we can't sell -- what we were trying --  
14 we were working with Feinstein and everybody to, perhaps,  
15 tax this or force them in some way to clean up the scrubbers  
16 or whatever down there.

17 Next, they said: Well, if we can't sell it to the  
18 U.S., we'll sell it to Mexico. And that's a lie, because  
19 there's not the infrastructure to move it south. There's  
20 not enough lines down there to take it anywhere.

21 Next, they were supposed to put state-of-the-art  
22 scrubbers on after a lot of beating up. And they -- I don't  
23 know if they are on yet.

24 Brad, are they on yet?  
25 MR. POIRIEZ: All accept for one.

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1 MR. JOE MARUCA: Okay. All accept for one. This  
2 is how long?

3 Well, what they've got to do -- and the other  
4 issue that's been talked about is water. Water is the --  
5 the water that goes to the New River, flows into -- is a  
6 very vital element of the Salton Sea, which is under siege.  
7 The huge percentage of that water is going to be too huge,  
8 to large a percentage of that water is going to be used, is  
9 being used to cool those down. And you don't necessarily  
10 need that and you can do it in other ways. We've got to  
11 stop them from using that water, diverting the water before  
12 it gets to the Salton Sea. We have got to make them do  
13 offsets here.

14 When I originally talked to Sempra  
15 representatives, I said -- the guy was, I forget his name,  
16 Bob, whatever was his name, he was a real slick guy. I  
17 said: Bob, build your plant in Imperial County. I'll be  
18 the first to support you. Pay your U.S. taxes. Pay  
19 prevailing wages, U.S. wages. Do the offsets in the United  
20 States.

21 You know, well, that, of course, doing it in  
22 Mexico for obvious reasons. They don't have to do any of  
23 the above. So let's force them now not to use that water,  
24 let's force them to do offsets here in the United States.

25 Obviously, we're never going to be able to stop

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1 those plants from operating. They are in Mexico. We can do  
2 something about: If you don't do this, you can't move this  
3 across the grid. And the only thing I think we can do right  
4 now is offsets. Let's make them do offsets here.

5 I would submit, in closing, no way in hell that  
6 those plants would be built in Tijuana with that pipeline  
7 going through San Diego without offsets and all kinds of  
8 things happening over there, because those people have  
9 political power and we don't and that's where they're here.  
10 And they ought to pay the price for that.

11 My son wakes up in the morning and starts  
12 coughing. If you go to the elementary schools around here  
13 you will see the cabinets full of asthma medicine, cough  
14 medicine, allergy medicines. I don't blame that all on  
15 Sempra and Intergen, but that's another ingredient. So  
16 let's do something to help stop this now.

17 Thank very much for your time.

18 MR. ANTHONY COMO: Thank you, Mr. Maruca.

19 Brad Poiriez.

20 MR. BRAD POIRIEZ: Thank you.

21 Brad Poiriez, P-O-I-R-I-E-Z, senior manager with  
22 Imperial County Air Pollution Control District. Thanks for  
23 the time.

24 It's hard to follow up the good, passionate  
25 comments from Joe, but I have some myself, also, for the air

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